

CITY OF BELLEVUE
EAST MAIN STATION AREA PLANNING
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

June 15, 2016
4:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E-113

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Breiland, Christie Hammond, John King, Scott Lampe, Jim Long, Erin Powell, Danny Rogers, Pamela Unger, Bill Thurston

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Kattermann, Planning and Community Development Department; Phil Harris, John Murphy, Transportation Department

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA, APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. by Chair Lampe who presided.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Long. The motion was seconded by Ms. Powell and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Mr. Breiland. The motion was seconded by Ms. Powell and the motion carried unanimously.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Renay Bennett, 826 108th Avenue SE, thanked the CAC members for their hard work over the last 22 months. She also thanked the members for incorporating most of her comments and suggestions into the final document. She called attention to the traffic analysis prepared by the staff and noted that the numbers as calculated and shown are inaccurate and misleading. She pointed out that Appendix A3.4, the potential projects and planning level cost estimates, is one of several documents in the report that she had not previously seen. The projects highlighted in the document are all under the pedestrian and bicycle improvements umbrella. There is also a section pertaining specifically to Surrey Downs that has to do with speed bumps, road narrowing items and traffic circles. The concern is that the list is not completely accurate in that it does not include Bellecrest, which will be needing many of the same improvements. With the projects are listed as pedestrian and bicycle, it is possible the money will be directed in a certain place where maybe it should not be, that it should be going for neighborhood traffic and transportation studies.

Senior Planner Mike Kattermann called attention to copies of emails received that were included in the packet along with the staff responses.

3. REVIEW OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

Mr. Kattermann called attention to Attachment 3, the summary provided by the consultant EnviroIssues. He noted that the document summarized the comments and responses to the survey questions, both in the online and in-person open house. Only six persons filled out the survey at the open house, and some 30 filled it out online. He briefly reviewed the summary with the committee members.

4. CAC FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Kattermann briefly reviewed the list of proposed revisions to the document, beginning with the addition of an acknowledgment page listing the Committee members, staff and consultants who worked on the document. He identified no changes to the text of the transmittal memo and said he would be adding a photo of the Committee members. No changes were proposed to the text of the vision statement, but the suggestion was made to add some sketches relative to the streetscape and the redevelopment scenario. He suggested a rewrite of the first paragraph on page 19 to have it read “Also in the study area east of I-405 is the triangular area defined by Main Street to the north, I-405 and 116th Avenue NE to the east.” He noted that the graphics on pages 20 and 21 essentially show the same thing; he proposed using a graphic on page 20 showing bicycle, sidewalk or bus routes, and relabeling the graphic on page 21 to “East Link Portal and East Main Park.”

Continuing, Mr. Kattermann said the placeholder on page 27 for the May 18 open house will be replaced with a summarizing paragraph. Referring to the section regarding “Other Plans and Programs” on page 30, he proposed replacing the reference to the Transit Master Plan with a reference to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Initiative because nothing in the report proposes a modification of the Transit Master Plan. It was noted, however, that it would be more inclusive to retain the reference to the Transit Master Plan and include a reference to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Initiative.

Mr. Kattermann pointed out that checkmarks were missing from the first three boxes of the matrix on page 35, specifically under Other Plans and Programs. He said he would add those. He also noted the need to delete the word “to” from the first line of item 10 in the same matrix. He said the graphic on page 39 is very similar to one used on page 44 where the focus is the stepbacks; he proposed swapping it out for one that shows a sidewalk café configuration.

Ms. Unger commented that throughout the document words like “monitor” and phrases like “continue to evaluate” are used without actually proposing any traffic plan. She said the Committee had long and extensive discussions around what the solution is and could not come to a consensus, but there is nothing in the document that outlines where the Committee was conflicted. Mr. Kattermann called attention to page 34 and the synopsis of the issue aimed at providing some context for the strategies and suggested revisions could be made to it.

Ms. Powell suggested the word “possibility” as used in the first sentence of the first paragraph on page 34 was erroneous given that increased traffic should be taken as a given. There was agreement to replace “possibility” with “issue.”

Ms. Unger said the piece that is not addressed is the fact that 108th Avenue SE is a collector arterial in addition to being a neighborhood street. There was agreement to include that fact.

Ms. Hammond suggested something should be added to the first paragraph to indicate the Committee addressed the issue of hide and ride parking in the neighborhood. She also suggested wording could be added that reinforce the ongoing transportation challenges.

Chair Lampe called attention to the penultimate bullet in section 2 of the matrix on page 45 and commented that the limit on building height to 65 feet within 300 feet of 112th Avenue SE excludes the area immediately south of Main Street. He suggested deleting “for buildings outside of the additional FAR/Height (5.0, 300 feet) area” so that the stepback premise applies to the entire length of 112th Avenue SE.

Ms. Unger suggested that would fundamentally change what the Commission talked about relative to having a big building on the corner. Chair Lampe said it would require limiting building height to 65 feet within 50 feet of 112th Avenue SE. Ms. Unger said it was her recollection that the Committee had agreed it would be alright to have a tall building in the triangle that is directly across from the portal park.

Mr. Breiland agreed with Ms. Unger. The Committee talked at length about what to do with the corner and concluded that it is the right location for an iconic building. He proposed leaving the text unchanged and the full Committee agreed.

Ms. Powell referred to section 3 on page 45 and proposed including language indicating the view corridor issue was discussed at length without reaching a consensus. Mr. Kattermann said use of the phrase “minimize or eliminate” is a reflection of the lack of consensus. He allowed that Ms. Powell had not agreed with the approach and suggested she was free to make her views known directly to the Council.

Mr. Kattermann said the proposed changes would be made to the document and the revised version sent out to all Committee members to review. The issue is slated to be presented to the City Council on July 11. The perspective of the Committee will be presented at that meeting by Chair Lampe. The Committee members were invited to attend.

Ms. Unger pointed out that nothing is said in the transmittal about the fact that there was not unanimous agreement relative to every issue and suggested it would be good to acknowledge that. Mr. Kattermann said consensus is not the same as unanimity, something that is understood by the Council. He agreed, however, that language could be added to the last sentence of the first paragraph of the transmittal memo to the effect that although there was not unanimity on all of the strategies, the group did reach consensus on the overall vision and plan. There was agreement to make that change.

Mr. King pointed out that there was a lot of negative feedback at the last open house, particularly in regard to the height of buildings in the study area. That is something that underscores the nature of consensus. Mr. Kattermann said part of the point of the transmittal memo is to express how the Committee worked in coming up with the recommendations. A great deal of consideration was given to every issue during the process. Chair Lampe said that could be verbally expressed as the package is presented to the Council.

Mr. Kattermann informed the Committee that the work of Senior Planner Phil Harris on behalf of the city will end with the report. He said Mr. Harris' contributions had been invaluable and fully appreciated.

Mr. Kattermann said once the SEPA review is completed, the Council will be asked to formally accept and approve the document. The Council will then refer the code work to the Planning Commission.

Ms. Unger asked if during the presentation to the Council it could be stressed that the capital improvements should be completed by the time the station opens. Chair Lampe said he would be glad to do that.

Chair Lampe acknowledged the staff and all the work done to support the process.

Ms. Powell asked if the specific budget line items would be offered up for additional tax revenue asks or just where the funding would come from. Mr. Harris added that the figures are all planning level cost estimates. The actual final costs may be different. Funding to address the individual projects will come from a variety of sources. There has been talk at the Council level about floating a levy to fund neighborhood safety and transportation projects, but none of the projects in the report will receive funding from that source. Mr. Kattermann stressed that nothing has been funded to date, but projects that are not in the plan do not even get talked about at the funding level, so presentation of the plan is an important first step.

Ms. Powell called attention to Appendix A3 and the Surrey Downs pedestrian enhancements and pointed out that nothing is mentioned about 108th Avenue SE. Transportation Planner John Murphy explained that the projects on the list are outside of what is currently in the Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program. Projects associated with 108th Avenue SE are already in that program. The list recognizes the link between pedestrian safety and traffic calming. The discussion at the Committee level was mixed with regard to whether or not sidewalks are appropriate or not appropriate for Surrey Downs, which drove the focus to looking for other ways to improve the pedestrian environment.

Chair Lampe said one way to approach the issue would be to reference the station area generically rather than mentioning Surrey Downs specifically.

Mr. Kattermann said the appendix relates back to a specific discussion the Committee had about a year ago regarding different pedestrian projects. Mr. Harris said the discussion was the one in which the Committee chose which routes should be prioritized for getting to and from the

station. The map on page 33 of the report highlights the streets where treatments might be in order.

Ms. Hammond noted that the Committee had talked at length about possible parking issues. She said she did not see anything in the budget planning section about any provisions for making changes to parking, such as the residential zones. Mr. Murphy explained that every strategy embedded in the plan will require some funding. The planning level cost estimates were only done for the projects specifically aimed at improving the ped/bike environment. Ms. Hammond commented that the parking issue is directly related to pedestrian safety. Mr. Murphy agreed, pointing out that parking can either improve or make worse the pedestrian experience, but that is a programmatic element rather than a capital element and as such would be addressed through the existing residential parking program.

Mr. Breiland proposed adding a paragraph at the beginning of the section to make it clear the planning level cost estimates are for capital ped/bike projects and are not part of other city plans or programs.

Ms. Powell asked if having the planning level cost estimates will speed up the time in getting the projects built. Mr. Kattermann said it will not necessarily help in that regard but it certainly will not hurt in any way.

5. CAC SIGNING OF TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Mr. Kattermann reminded the Committee members that at the first meeting in September 2014 he asked for comment how success at the end of the process would be defined. He provided them with copies of the notes indicating what was said and left it to them to draw their own conclusions relative to how well the Committee had done.

The Committee members signed the transmittal letter.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. David Slight, 227 110th Avenue SE, congratulated the Committee on its success. He said where the Committee has ended up is with a 300-foot building with no setbacks across the road from Surrey Downs. The setbacks are specifically excluded, and whether the building is iconic or not, a building of that height in that location cannot be viewed as a success. Where the process has ended up is not in a particularly good position. The issue will be taken up again once the Planning Commission begins its work on the code.

Mr. Mon Wig with Wig Properties, 4811 134th Place SE, shared with the Committee his appreciation for the input provided by every member of the Committee. He thanked them for the time and energy put into the process.

Ms. Renay Bennett, 826 108th Avenue SE, said the city's definition of a street does not define a neighborhood. She said her neighborhood is just as important as anyone else's and deserves the same consideration and respect. She added that 108th Avenue SE between Main Street and

Bellevue Way is the same collector arterial that is 108th Avenue SE from Bellevue Way down to the freeway. She said the section of 108th Avenue SE that serves her neighborhood has two-thirds as much traffic as the section to the south of Bellevue Way. It should be kept in mind that 108th Avenue SE has been treated very differently by the city for many years because it is understood that it is a specific area that is in need of being protected. The Surrey Downs boundaries include 108th Avenue SE from Main Street to SE 11th Street. When talking about part of one neighborhood shuffling traffic off into another; that is what is being talked about and it is not very pretty. The Committee says it has reached consensus, but throughout the process there has been a single vote against certain things. It is by design that the Committee has not taken votes, because that would make it clear where everyone stands. She thanked Ms. Powell for consistently standing up for the neighborhood.

Mr. Kattermann added his thanks to every member of the Committee. He said over the years he has worked with many different groups and said the Committee did a fantastic amount of work. He allowed that the process took longer than first anticipated, but said he appreciated the members all sticking with it and working through all of the issues. The Planning Commission will give deference to the recommendations of the Committee but in their work on the code they will not be bound by the recommendations.

Mr. Thurston thanked the staff, particularly Mr. Kattermann, for his leadership throughout the process, and thanked Chair Lampe for his leadership. He said he feels very good about the outcome. While there was not unanimity, the differences that were felt deeply by some and all found their way into the final document. Additionally, public input throughout the process was magnanimous and deeply felt. He thanked the Wigs for providing a vision for what could be done by way of creating a placemaking development.

7. ADJOURN

Chair Lampe adjourned the meeting at 5:11 p.m.